

**CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA**

**Special Public Hearing Meeting  
Monday, April 4, 2005 - - 4:00 P.M.**

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Present: Mayor William D. Euille, Vice Mayor Redella S. Pepper, Members of Council Ludwig P. Gaines, K. Rob Krupicka, Andrew H. Macdonald, Paul C. Smedberg and Joyce Woodson.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Mr. Hartmann, City Manager; Ms. Evans, Assistant City Manager; Mr. Pessoa, City Attorney; Mr. Jinks, Assistant City Manager; Ms. Boyd, Director, Citizen Assistance; Mr. Neckel, Director, Finance; Ms. Davis, Director of Housing; Ms. Gordon, Public Information Officer; Ms. Federico, Director, Historic Alexandria; Fire Chief Mesaris; Mr. Johnson, Director, Office of Management and Budget; Ms. Taylor, Budget Analyst, Office of Management and Budget; Ms. Padron, Budget Analyst; Ms. Moore, Budget Analyst; Mr. Coleman, Budget Analyst; Mr. Doku, Budget Analyst; Ms. Murphy, Budget Analyst; Mr. Routt, Budget Analyst; Mr. Peacor, IT; Captain Spruill, Sr., Police Department; and Mr. Lloyd, General Services.

Recorded by: Jackie M. Henderson, City Clerk and Clerk of Council

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**OPENING**

1. Calling the Roll.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Euille, and the City Clerk called the Roll; all members of City Council were present.

2. Public Hearing on the Proposed Annual Operating Budget for FY 2006 (including Schools) and the Proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for FY 2006-2011 (including the School CIP.)

While comments on tax rates can be made as part of the public hearing on the Budget and the CIP, the Public Hearing on An Ordinance to Establish Real Estate and Personal Property Tax Rates for Calendar Year 2006 and the effective tax rate increase for 2006 will be held on April 26, 2005.

The following persons participated in the public hearing:

1. Kelly Signs, 608 W. View Terrace, PTA president at Douglas MacArthur, asked Council to fully fund the school budget. She then introduced the following two MacArthur students.

2. John West, 25 Ft. William Parkway, president, SCA, Douglas MacArthur Elementary School, asked Council to approve the school budget, and he spoke of his education at MacArthur.

3. Deja Robinson, 1209 Quaker Hill Drive, secretary, SCA, Douglas MacArthur Elementary School, asked Council to approve the school budget and she spoke of the many great teachers at MacArthur.

4. Susan Johnson, 2918 N. Rosser Street, chair of the Early Childhood Commission, spoke in support of the small increase in the children's fund, and she asked Council to pass the increase in the eligibility scale from 185 percent of poverty to 250 percent, support the school budget, and a small amount to start inquiry into universal access to preschool. She said there is a need of stable source of funding for some of the programs that have proved valuable to the Early Childhood Committee, which rely on the grant process of the Children's Fund to keep them operating.

5. Ragiya Mire, 340 S. Whiting Street, Apt. F-23, thanked Council for supporting Healthy Families and noted how Healthy Families helped her as a parent.

6. Cathy Puskar, 215 E. Oak Street, volunteer member of the Advisory Committee for Healthy Families Alexandria and is a member of the Youth Policy Commission, asked Council to help Healthy Families extend its services more broadly. She said they appreciate the City Manager's four percent increase to the Children's Fund, but it might not be enough to restate them to the 2003 levels and she asked Council to consider shifting Healthy Families Alexandria into the City budget and to reinstate funding to the 2003 level.

7. Michael G. Wenk, 1007 Beverly Drive, member of the board of Park Fairfax, said they support the eight cent drop in the tax rate, would prefer to consider a 12 cent drop, and perhaps it could consider a compromise of 10 cents. He said they are concerned because their tax assessments have increased by 28 percent, and they have an unfunded mandate from Richmond on changing oil-based paints to latex, which will increase their condo fees.

8. Amber Nightingale, 3382 Martha Custis Drive, spoke on behalf of citizens with disabilities and on services and housing for adults with developmental disabilities. She said her sister Victoria lives in a program in Woodbridge and she's been trying to move her to Alexandria for over a year and have been told there would be a five or ten year wait. She asked Council to consider expanding residential services and housing

options for individuals with disabilities.

9. Victoria Nightingale, 3382 Martha Custis Drive, spoke of her wait on the list for housing in Alexandria for one year, and said a move from one city to another should not take so long.

10. Kathy May, 100 N. Washington Street, Falls Church, director of advocacy for ARC of Northern Virginia, asked for support of the program, which serves people with developmental disabilities and their families by providing advocacy, education, training and direct service programs.

11. Nathan Allen, 207 E. Glebe Road, Unit D, spoke about how the City is helping adults with developmental disabilities, and spoke of the support the adults need and asked Council to remember the people with disabilities in its budget process.

12. David Pritzker, 5400 Ox Road, Fairfax Station, said he is one of the two City representatives on the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, asked for Council's support of the NVRPA and noted the facilities built by the NVRPA in the City.

13. Joseph S. Bennett, 5022 B Barbour Drive, spoke of a request made to him to sign a petition to put a cap on budget expenditures so the tax rate could be reduced, and he found the approach unimaginative, unhelpful, unworkable, and unconnected to the difficult task of making hard budget decisions intelligently and makes more sense to go through the budget program by program and make decisions. He spoke to tax relief and the increased sales tax to fund transportation and transit improvements. He noted that people are willing to pay the prices of houses, along with the taxes, in the City.

14. William S. Dickinson, 5400 Ox Road, Fairfax Station, one of the two City representatives to the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority and its chair, reenforced what Mr. Pritzker said. He noted the NVRPA is asking for an increase of \$40,000. He asked Council to look at the request for additional funds in the amount of \$10,000 for Carlyle House.

15. Carol McDonnough, 133 Park Street NE, Vienna, representing the Women's Center, spoke in support of the proposed seven percent increase of the Community Partnership Fund. She noted the programs the Women's Shelter offers.

16. Mary Riley, 202 East Alexandria Avenue, speaking on behalf of the Community Services Board, thanked Council for its support of citizens with disabilities and asked Council to continue support of the department. She spoke of the unmet needs and the most pressing is case management services for many of the substance abuse outpatient consumers.

17. Judy Noritake, 605 Prince Street, said it is important to make Patrick Henry and Charles Houston Recreational facilities serviceable for the next 10-15 years,

and it will take a lot more money than it has on the table now to do that correctly. The Open Space Steering Committee has asked her to voice their support for continuing the one cent for open space, and they have money for acquisition, but there is not money in the budget for development of any of these areas. She said her personal opinion is they need to find other ways to do the development of the properties. Trails are important to the community and the program introduced by Councilmembers Smedberg, Gaines and Krupicka is a wonderful program and they need to make that happen. The Park and Recreation Commission and the Youth Sports Advisory Group have asked Council to move up in the timeframe the artificial turf for Four Mile Run.

18. Tamara Powers, 242 Burgess Avenue, asked Council to halt the spread of the modified school calendar, and she spoke of the cost of the program, the segregation the modified school calendar would cause, and the full day care it may require.

19. William Harris, 1106 Tuckahoe Lane, president of the Board of Senior Services of Alexandria, spoke about the senior taxi and the projected shortfall from Senior Services funding. He asked that the \$179,000 be increased to \$200,000 for senior taxi.

20. Dr. Roger Chiner, 3804 Executive Avenue, #D-1, medical director of the Arlandria Health Center, said they have 4,300 patients, and he asked for Council's continued support in the coming year.

21. Victoria Ramirez, 3804 Executive Avenue, #D-1, said the Arlandria Health Center is able to provide needed services to people who are experiencing a lot of pain and crisis. She asked Council for its continued support.

22. Sherri Brown, 1600 Prince Street, #603, speaking for the arts, asked for continued funding increases for grants. She said recreation and parks wants to build a solid arts program, but the only increases recommended were for special events and letting the cultural arts administrator support the arts commission full-time, and she asked where is the rest.

23. Kathryn Brown, 2724 Hickrey Street, speaking for the Arts Forum as vice-chair of advocacy, thanked Council for support of the arts and she recognized those in the audience today in support of the arts from the Alexandria Harmonizers, Cathy Hardy Gray Dance Theatre, the Eclipse Chamber Orchestra, the Springwater Fiber Workshop, The Forum, and the Del Ray Artisans.

24. Mary Elizabeth Campbell, 6565 Arlington Blvd., Suite 500, Falls Church, staff member of Capital Hospice, thanked Council for consideration of its budget request of \$20,000 over two years to support their charity care in the Alexandria community.

25. Katherine L. Morrison, 418 S. Washington Street, president and CEO of

the Campagna Center, spoke in support of funding for Head Start and said they need funds to continue the quality of care.

26. John Renner, 301 N. Fairfax Street, president-elect of First Night Alexandria, urged Council not to add an admissions tax and urged Council to seek the alternative revenue from some of the broad-based sources that have been proposed, such as cigarette, cell phone or sewer tax.

27. Charlie Collum, 801 N. Fairfax Street, chair of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, spoke of the funding received from the businesses in the City. He asked Council for additional funding for the support of the Alexandria Small Business Development Center.

28. Lonnie Rich, 801 N. Fairfax Street, appearing on behalf of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, said the Chamber supports acquisition of open space through the one cent tax or other available means. The Chamber looks forward to working with the City on a waterfront plan. The Chamber supports the changes in the affordable homeownership program, and they commend the Manager's recommendation to dedicate \$3.7 million in additional funds for affordable housing through recordation fees and encouraged Council to develop a workforce housing plan. The Chamber encourages the use of industrial development bonds to finance development of the supply of workforce housing. The Chamber recommends that the City revise the voluntary affordable housing tax that is currently paid by developers. The Chamber also applauds making outdoor dining a reality.

29. Joan Renner, 801 N. Fairfax Street, immediate past chair of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, spoke of the real estate tax rate being reduced by at least eight cents, but it is still a 12 percent increase in the tax bill of the average homeowner and encouraged Council to consider ways to further reduce this year's tax rate and consider measures that would limit it and further tax increases so the average bill doesn't increase by more than six to eight percent. They encourage Council to use the cigarette tax, cell phone tax and the sewer fees as they are reasonable alternatives to an admissions tax. The admissions tax unfairly singles out one segment of the business community for taxation.

30. Ken Moore, 801 N. Fairfax Street, president and CEO of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, said the Chamber applauds the proposed business license reform. On the City's operating budget, the Chamber encourages fiscal responsibility and they encourage Council to continue to identify the explore ways to achieve cost savings to identify and eliminate duplication and overlap between City departments. The Chamber supports the new Police positions, a school budget that supports excellence in education, the City's policy of balancing cash capital and debt financing to finance needed capital improvements, and encourages the use of the City's website to make information available on-line. The Chamber supports establishing the PTO shuttle and AlexNet.com for PTO workers and businesses.

31. Vic Glasberg, 6 East Alexandria Avenue, spoke about the property tax, and he said Council should give the City Manager what he needs to run the City. If the Council reduces the rate by four cents, they would remain well in sync with what is being charged in neighboring jurisdictions. There isn't enough money, and if schools get everything the Manager has recommended, they won't have enough. If the Police, T&ES and Human Services get every penny of the Manager's budget, those departments will not have enough.

32. Hudson Reilly, immediate past chair of the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association, spoke about the importance of residential and business communities working together to help solve challenges. He encouraged Council to find a balanced approach to understand the importance of investing in their economy. The ACVA has travel data that says that the ACVA has given back to the City, in direct and indirect taxes, \$10.43 for each dollar invested.

33. Robert Canady, 1616 King Street, general manager of the Hampton Inn, Alexandria Old Town and president of the Alexandria Hotel Association, spoke about the need for a strong economy and to hold property taxes at a reasonable level. During the 2000 deliberations, the Hotel Association asked Council to impose a \$1.00 per room per night tax on hotel rooms in the City and to direct that money to the tourism marketing through ACVA, and since that time, they have seen an astonishing return on investment and the new money has provided 67 percent of all funding for ACVA. The ACVA cannot expand its focus to the entire City without the full support of the Council and staff.

34. Jane Sleeva, 400 Madison Street, #2206, representing the board of the Campagna Center as past chair, read a letter concerning the support of the goals in the budget, specifically a caring community that is diverse and affordable and public schools that are among the best in Northern Virginia. She said they have reduced their original funding request to reflect the minimum needed to maintain program quality--\$170,469 for Head Start and \$133,146 for Campagna Kids, which represents only .8 percent of the budget increases proposed by the City Manager. The Campagna Center is committed to the quality of the programs and are ready to add \$50,000 to the \$200,000 it contributes in private funds to Head Start for two new positions and will provide \$25,000 to the \$120,000 in private funds for Campagna Kids to enhance the quality of the school-age child care.

35. Mike Oliver, 3113 Circle Hill Road, said he and his wife are very satisfied school consumers, he spoke about rising property taxes, he thanked Council for the acceptance of the HUD grant for Safe Haven, and he urged restoration of the position in the budget of the position Mary Riley spoke of for the Community Services Board for that position.

36. Edward Hilz, 3405 B S. Stafford Street, Arlington, treasurer of the Fairlington Civic Association, said joining him is Nancy Hunt, the president of the civic association, and he spoke about the problem they have with the traffic going into the

Bradley Shopping Center, as it is very unsafe for pedestrians and cars. He said that if funding is not available for the whole project, they would hope it would be done in stages, and they ask that a timetable and funding be discussed with staff.

37. Bill North-Rudin, 2210 Mt. Vernon Avenue, executive director of the Alexandria Volunteer Bureau, spoke for full funding of two important funds administered by the City--the Community Partnership Fund for \$924,444 and the Youth Fund for \$301,807. He also asked that Council not impose the admissions tax on events for those in the nonprofit community.

38. Scott Humphrey, 922 S. St. Asaph Street, a business owner and representative as vice chair of the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, and member and chair of the Industrial Development Authority, spoke of the bonding and funding the IDA does. He noted that they are throw in with other economically productive organizations budget, and there is a \$500,000 allocation for their budget. He said they are suggesting that when they spend the dollar for economic development, they produce \$4.96 in return, so they suggest the \$41,000 be allocated to all of those who are requesting that \$41,000.

39. Lisa Chimento, 524 Ft. Williams Pkwy, speaking on behalf of the Budget and Fiscal Affairs Advisory Committee, presented their preliminary reviews on the budget, noting that they will provide the written report on April 19. She noted that on revenue and tax relief, BFAAC supports the general decrease in the real property tax rate. They support the more targeted tax relief efforts as proposed by the City Manager, which can help keep Alexandria affordable. If Council wishes to consider further reductions in the real property tax rate, Council should look first to find any such reduction in the operating budget or find new on-going revenue sources. They support the cola and merit increase for City and school employees, however, they urge Council to look carefully at the cost of health insurance benefits and new hires. On the CIP budget and debt financing plan, the CIP budget does meet legitimate long-term capital project needs, however, they raise a warning that the rebuilding of TC Williams, the construction of the new public safety center, increases contribution to transit costs, renovation and expansion of Chinquapin and construction of an all-city sports facility put the CIP on the verge of becoming unaffordable. They urge Council to reduce cash capital contributions to the CIP and spread the burden out more equitably to future generations of Alexandrians. They will present the final recommendations on economic development activities when the report is submitted on April 19, but note that the City funding for activities has increased over three-fold over the past ten years, and they note that other jurisdictions have departments of economic development offices that are integral to the City governments function.

In response to a question from Mayor Euille, Ms. Chimento said the BFAAC has not yet made its recommendations on the tax rate. In response to a question from Councilman Macdonald, Ms. Chimento said BFAAC recommends support of the admissions tax.

40. Marie Mudd, 25 W. Glebe Road, #C-13 said she has lived in Alexandria for 85 years, she has no relatives to take her to the store or to the doctor, and she is completely dependent on the senior taxi service to go to the doctor or the store.

41. Khurid Khan, 106 S. Hudson Street, spoke in support of the senior taxi service to take her to the hospital, doctor, to get medicine and groceries.

42. Eileen Longstreet, 121 N. St. Asaph Street, executive director of Senior Services, spoke in favor of supplemental funds to stop the red ink that is having a severe impact on the senior services organization. She said the seniors who use senior taxi use it for groceries and medical appointments, so the need for the service outside of the City is of great importance to seniors.

43. Edward Rey, 3103 Ninth Road, North, Arlington, executive director of the Arlington Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless and co-chair of Alexandria's Homeless Services Coordinating Committee, spoke in support of increasing the Community Partnership Fund for services. He said with the federal funding remaining level for the past five years and with the state funding declining, they have had to reduce the number of Alexandria families from 18 in previous years to 14 in FY 2004 to 11 projected at the end of this year.

44. Don Melh, 501 Slaters Lane, #722, spoke in favor of senior taxis and hoped Council would follow the suggestions of Joe Bennett earlier.

45. Jon Liss, 219 Burgess Avenue, interpreted into English for Ms. Meujivar and Mr. Lara.

46. Vicky Meujivar, 3801 Mt. Vernon Avenue, spoke for working families in Alexandria, who are living in crisis, as rents have risen dramatically for one bedroom apartments, which are over \$1,000 a month, and they need workforce housing for all workers - janitors, housekeepers, landscapers, taxi drivers, cooks and child care providers. No new affordable housing is being produced and very little is being preserved. She asked Council to set aside two cents of the property taxes for the preservation and production of housing for low-income working families. She also noted that working families of color face another crisis in terms of the public schools - and two out of five Latino and African American students do not pass standardized tests, which is worse than white students. She spoke in favor of the entire school budget and for the modified school calendar and parent liaisons, which will improve schools.

47. Sheryl Bell, 910 Gibbon Street, president of UNITY, Tenant and Workers, spoke in favor of expanding access to child care and increasing the eligibility level to 250 percent of poverty level. Unless the pool of children needing care is increased, many providers will go without business, and it is important to provide quality early childhood education and care to all youth. She spoke in support of the inclusion of child care funding in the budget, and taxi drivers efforts to win economic human rights and

improved customer service. She asked Council to see that there is sufficient money in the budget to ensure aggressive enforcement of the new taxi code.

48. Carlos Lara, 3200 Commonwealth Avenue, #306, speaking on behalf of the Tenants and Workers Support Committee, spoke about the recent report of the health status of people in Alexandria and that the survey severely under-represented African Americans and Latinos and that 80 percent of Latino working people do not have health insurance. He said health funding should take into account the needs of low and moderate income working families, many of which have no regular access to health care. He asked Council to do what is necessary to support working families and preserve Alexandria's diversity. They need funds for affordable housing - to save what they have and build more. He also asked Council to fully fund the City school budget, and it should enforce the new fairer taxi regulations, it should have access to health care for working families and fund child care initiatives to allow access to quality child care.

49. Tom Reiner, 505 N. Armistead Street, said he has his own business and is on disability. He spoke for the Endependence Center, who are trying to get their funding increased, and he said they have helped him get where he is today, and he hoped they are able to continue to provide the services they provide.

(City Council took a 10 minute break at this time - 6:34 p.m.)

50. Joe Egerton, 1117 King Street, current board member of ACVA and chair of its marketing committee, and former board member of KSMET, spoke about ACVA's proven track record of returning \$10.00 for every \$1.00 given by the City and he spoke to ACVA's marketing efforts. The City should recognize ACVA for its marketing arm. He spoke about the demolition of important architecture in old town, the Lee boyhood home to slip through their fingers, and upscale restaurants have closed and moved away because of parking issues. The City is highly dependent on people coming into it, and that requires a marketing arm.

51. Bernard Fagelson, 1412 Key Drive, passed out pictures of the flooding problem on Key Drive and asked that the money to fix Key Drive remain in the budget.

52. Theresa Hernandez, 27 S. Early Street, spoke about the need for quality child care and said the City has the most NAEYC accredited centers. Alexandria Head Start is an asset to the public school system and the teachers use assessment tolls to identify students with special needs. Several years ago there was a mandate from the government to have Head Start teachers have a bachelors degree by 2008, but the Federal government has kept the Head Start budget the same. She said the Campagna Center is asking the Council to budget money for Head Start.

53. Robert Seidenberg, 24 W. Uhler Avenue, spoke about the modified school calendar at Mt. Vernon, and the parents who want to know the full story of the modified school calendar have to do the research themselves. He said the modified school

calendar is costlier and the Schools have requested \$400,000 additional per school per year. He said the Superintendent and the School Board have not projected any improvement on the SOL's or other standardized tests or for higher scores for ESL students for those on the modified school calendar. He said the modified school calendar is a gimmick, and the proponents will not project any improvement of academic performance, but they have refused to create a statement of purpose for implementing the modified school calendar at Mt. Vernon, as they did at Tucker, and he asked without that, how is it possible to measure the success or failure of the program one to three or five years from now, and how can Council know if it was worth spending the \$400,000 a year.

54. Francis Chase, 4600 Duke Street, Suite 305, president of the Education Association of Alexandria, spoke in support of the ACPS budget and said they are pleased with the outcome of the budget, which includes a health insurance increase, employee compensation and small class sizes, and he urged Council to fully fund the budget.

55. Katy Cannady, 20 E. Oak Street, said taxes are the price one pays for civilization, and she has always looked on income redistribution through the tax system as a good thing, as long as the income that is redistributed is from those who live comfortably to those who lack comforts. She said the City needs to change how it spends municipal funds, the residential real estate owners are treated as a herd of cash cows, and she did not favor a spending cap. She spoke about the \$89 million on a new high school, and she thought there could be a serviceable school for less than that. Council approved an operating budget appropriation to allow the Schools to assign a take home lap top computer to every student in the high school. She suggested that Council budget a lot less than \$60 million for a new Police facility this year. She urged Council to remove most of the \$2 million allocated to the ACVA. The \$3 million in the economic partnership should be closely looked at, and she wanted the \$30,000 for the Eisenhower Partnership and the \$35,000 for the West End Business Association to be struck entirely.

56. Edward Bassey, 3921 Old Dominion Blvd., Apt. 202, said he is a consumer of the Endependence Center of Virginia, and he asked Council to continue to support the Center, and to expand the funding for people with disabilities. He said many people with disabilities want to go back to work, and he wants to go back to work, and he asked to count on Council's continuing and increasing support.

57. Maria Gonzalez interpreted from Spanish into English for the following speaker:

58. Justine Perole, 3808 Russell Road, Apt. #22, said he is a member of the Board of Directors of the Alexandria Clinic, and he spoke in support of the proposal to increase the budget for the Clinic. He thanked the Council for its economic support of the clinic and said they need more money to improve the services to more people, and the clinic is the only one that has such a large amount of services for the community in

Spanish.

59. Carol Loftur-Thun, 5275 Lee Highway, Suite 301, executive director of Crisis Link, urged Council to increase funding for the Community Partnership Fund and increase funding for comprehensive crisis prevention and early intervention, rather than waiting until mental health and other crisis become much more costly tragedies. She spoke about the increase in call volume this year, the increase in youth calls, and the suicide calls going up this year. She said they requested \$68,000, and with less funding, it will mean that Crisis Link will be unable to continue to provide reliable 24/7 crisis line services to the community, as well as training.

60. Wolf-Hard Ramm, 15 E. Alexandria Avenue, chair of the School Board Budget Advisory Committee, spoke in support of the Schools budget and CIP. The schools have done an excellent job of balancing their responsibility to the students against the City's limited resources. Speaking to the City Manager's funding proposals, the growth in operating funds the City budget has provided in recent years has been generous. The overall increase of 7.5 percent for 2006 continues that trend and allows for some needed expansion of programs that target student performance. However, the practical effect of the \$620,000 technology adjustment proposed by the City Manager will cut spending on school programs and he urged Council to restore the item in the budget. With regard to the CIP, there is a proposed reduction in the request for renovations and expansion at Minnie Howard by \$10.6 million, and they believe the reduction is too large relative to any likely weakness in future enrollment.

61. Van Van Fleet, 26 Wolfe Street, spoke about increased tax assessments, and he said it didn't appear the homeowners are receiving any real increased City services for the additional dollars remitted to the City from those increased assessments, with the exception of the 14 additional Policeman to curb violent rising crime. He said the major budget additions are the increase of 38 new staff positions and \$9.8 million additional for the schools. The school system wants to add another 37 staff positions to its payroll, despite the fact that total enrollment will only be 10,590 students, which is getting smaller, but every year the schools budget seems to be \$10 million higher than the previous year, and he said the City won't know how much of the additional money is going into the classroom until it does an audit. He said a through, efficiency effectiveness audit needs to be done of the entire operating budget and the CIP, to include the school system. He said there needs to be a cap on spending and the assessments need to be frozen.

62. Carl Smith, 1316 Bishop Lane, said there needs to be a balance between how much the property owners are asked to pay and how much the City is spending for the programs. There was 8.4 percent annual growth over the last five years in the City budget, and it was paid for by property tax increases. The City cannot expect to grow the budget at 8 1/2 percent if it means increasing the taxes on the property owners every year by more than 13 percent. Mr. Smith said he supports the three percent cap for one year to take a breath, work together to figure out what it can do without other sources of revenue it might find and come up with a solution to enable all to live in the

City with a tax system that is fair and has affordable housing for everyone.

63. Sheryl Gorsuch, 408 A. East Raymond Avenue, speaking on behalf of the PTA Council, said they wish to emphasize the importance of quality teachers and principals, as they are the core of what makes the schools an excellent school system, and the high cost of living creates recruitment and retention challenges, so they must continue to look for ways to remain competitive with neighboring jurisdictions. She spoke about the shortages in the staff and the inclusion of additional money for health care insurance and applauded the effort to help the employees.

64. Carolyn Alexander, 911 Franklin Street, said one of her biggest concerns is the school budget and what happens to her son after school in the before and after care program. She requested support of the Campagna Center budget in its entirety. She said she wants her son to continue in the Alexandria Public School system and wants to make sure he is in a safe environment in after care.

65. Aretha Shedrick, 424 N. Armistead Street, #204, spoke for the safe passage right of students at Frances Hammond who currently walk to school and go over to Burke Library by requesting a crossing guard at Seminary Road and Kenmore Avenue, as well as signs indicating one is entering a school zone. She said students are faced with crossing an overpass, a right turn onto 295, right turns on red, the on-ramp from 295 and the fire department across the street, and then they mix in adolescence, and it is an accident waiting to happen. Ms. Shedrick also spoke about the health hazard from the geese population, which spend a lot of time grazing on school fields, and the children play on the fields that are covered with geese feces. She asked Council to approve the school budget with no changes, with the addition of adding the crossing guard and geese vs. the health school environment.

66. Ellen Stanton, 2600 King Street, chair, Historic Alexandria Resources Commission, spoke about the lack of funding for the five years following 2006. She spoke of the capital needs for the historic structures. The Office of Historic Alexandria receives .5 percent of the City budget and they hope the capital budget can include the much needed improvements that are needed for their historic sites.

67. Vi Roger Degilio, 1115 King Street, spoke of the rising assessments and thanked Council for publishing a rate decrease that is substantial. He said the City could ask the schools for further savings, as the new positions they are hiring are not classroom positions. He spoke about cash capital, which is being abused, and it puts the burden on people to pay a substantial amount of future benefits, and it can stretch some of the future benefits out, can scale some of them back and reorder the priorities so they can deal with it.

68. Chris Gregerson, 125 Harvard Street, speaking as treasurer of the Upper King Street Neighborhood Association and as a citizen, said that as treasurer, they are actively considering support of the three percent resolution and will consider it formally at its April meeting. Mr. Gregerson said that speaking as a citizen, he is a worker too

and pays a lot of the bills, with a fairly expensive house fairly newly bought, and his taxes have increased about 30 percent in the two and a half years he has owned the house.

69. Julie Crenshaw, 816 Queen Street, said Council needs to change the name of the public-private partnerships and just call them City funded, as the partnerships are funded by the City. She said when one group is getting over \$2 million from the City and the amount coming in from the private is \$125,000, the City should just fund it all. She said spending needs to be looked at, and refusing to do an audit is reprehensible. She said someone in the schools said there was an area in the budget where they could hide things, and it is easy to hide things when an itemization is not done. She said if Council does not take the time to do an audit, then they are not being honest. She thanked Council for the school liaisons, as they have been trying to get parent liaisons for over four years. She said one of the concerns with spending is are they spending the money wisely and evaluating the programs. The things the people in Arlandria have been asking for, and other minority and immigrant populations, are what they need to educate themselves as adults and their children, and Council should listen to them more and ask for evaluations and know the programs actually work.

70. Joyce Rawlings, 327 Wesmond Drive, said she has worked at the Recreation Center, at Head Start, the Alexandria City Jail, Residential Youth Services and with Communities in Schools, and she has seen the advantages and necessity of having after-school programs in the situations that occur when they are limited and how many can be served or when costs prohibits enrollment and availability. She said she has been a foster parent to eight children while raising her three sons as a single parent and said that knowing there are programs for kids allow her to make good choices as to where her children could go and have positive adult supervision. She urged all to weigh heavily the need to bring together a plan to continue sustainable benefits for all the families they serve.

71. Kathleen Pepper, 5320 Phayer Avenue, chair of the Alexandria Archeological Commission, spoke in support of an increase in the CIP for the Office of Historic Alexandria. She said they are pleased with the \$150,000 for this year, but recommend that the same amount be added for each of the next five years as well. She said deferred maintenance and capital improvement projects adversely affects the City's historic properties.

72. Larry Campbell, 207 E. Windsor Avenue, said he has three daughters in the school system, and he left Mt. Vernon and spent months on the modified school calendar task force and left Mt. Vernon because of his dismay about the way in which the modified school calendar was pushed through and advocated by the Superintendent and school officials. He spoke of other jurisdiction's calendars and programs and the questions that were made at the time of the change. He said the Council should ask the School Board how many people are looking at moving.

73. Joseph Seskey, 3010 Colvin Street, president of the Alexandria Police

Association, said that on behalf of the over 300 men and women of their organization, he thanked Council for its positive comments in the last work session and for recognizing the importance of pay and compensation as it pertains to the Fire and Police Service professionals.

74. Sean McGowan, 2004 Mill Road, representing the 300 members of the Alexandria Police Union, thanked Council for its comments and support at the March 29 work session. He said action must be taken on the pay issue for the Police Department and he looked forward to working in committee with Council.

75. Sarita Schotta, 104 Prince Street, said that if all the departments were as responsive as the Clerk's Office and the Fire Department, she wouldn't even have bothered to come to speak. She spoke about the public-private partnerships, although it is usually more public than private. She said the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Bureau continues to be a thorn in the sides of her neighbors and herself, and she sees no benefit or return. She said the contribution in 2005 was over \$1.5 million. She said on the Schools, there is a public affairs officer at \$150,000 a year, and it has nothing to do with the individual or the incumbent, but it is the idea that they would need that job. She also questioned the parking garage at the high school, as they don't owe students parking.

76. Lou Cordia, 904 Vicor Lane, speaking on behalf of Alexandrians for a three percent compromise, said he is asking to stop another huge property tax increase and vote on May 2 for a three percent make sense compromise, which will strike a balance between last year's spending level and this year's upper limit of 6.4 percent that Council imposed on March 22, 2005. There is also an additional \$10 million or two percent more, available for City services should that money be needed, because in FY 04 and 03, the City collected \$10 million more than was projected. He also asked that during the calendar year, they undertake a serious and intensive investigation of how to restrain the growth of real property taxes and control spending for FY 07 and beyond. He spoke of the property tax bills rising and said tax bills have increased at four to five times inflation and City spending two to three times inflation, and Council is asking families to cut their budgets to pay the ever increasing City budget, and they ask the City to manage the budget as the citizens have to manage theirs.

77. Gayle Reuter, 110 E. Del Ray Avenue, spoke in support of items she feels are critical to the continued success and vibrancy of the City. She said that thanks to the City, the Potomac West Business Association, the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, the Small Business Development Center, and the Alexandria Convention and Visitors Association, they have a Del Ray community that was recently named as one of the five up and coming communities in the entire nation. She said that as a member of the Board of the Potomac West Business Association, she spoke in support of the request for funds to help ensure the important work done by the Mt. Vernon Avenue Plan. She said she is also on the board of the ACVA, and she said that for every dollar invested into ACVA, they have a return of more than \$10.00. She asked Council to continue funding for ACVA, AEDP, SBDC and PWBA.

78. Jennell Charles, 3804 Executive Avenue, D-1, executive director of the Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services and the Arlandria Health Center, said Council heard from many people earlier this evening thanking Council for its support of the Health Center. She said that last year, they raised over \$700,000 from the private sector and levered the City money to bring in \$650,000 of Federal money to help them pay for health care for the poor, and they provide access for low income families.

79. Rezene Hagos, 901 S. Highland Street, said he is the manager of the multicultural services program in Arlington, and he asked for an increase in the Community Partnership Fund. He spoke about the multicultural services program and what it does for residents.

80. Belay Embaye, 901 S. Holland Street, spoke about the citizen enterprise development group, who they lend money to people to start, maintain or expand their own business and said that since 1996, they have lent money to 61 people in Alexandria for a total of \$960,317.

81. Sheila Pierson, 210 Prince Street, member of the Board of Directors of the Campagna Center, spoke in support of additional funding for Head Start and Campagna Kids. She said they require a commitment of \$170,469 for Head Start and an additional \$133,146 for Campagna Kids, along with the increase of \$50,000 from the proposal set in the City Manager's budget.

82. Bill Haruby, 2157 Jamison Avenue, #2151, representing the Carlye Eisenhower Civic Association, said the association supports the goal for a cap on the budget to no more than three percent growth, because they believe there is a limit on the level of property tax increases where it begins to affect population diversity and make up. He said that while the City's average annual property tax increase has been 13 percent, the annual increase for Carlye is approximately 20 percent.

83. Joseph T. Gerard, 1401 Knox Place, representing the Seminary Hills Association, joins the previous speakers in supporting the three percent compromise. He said many of the people on fixed incomes are also volunteers and are interested in the environment, housing, child care and education and cannot sustain the burden over time. He said they need to get a much better handle on overall spending.

Mayor Euille stated that Council stands ready to work with any group of citizens and the BFAAC to address the matter of how the City can control costs but to come up with some solutions relative to the ever-increasing tax assessments.

84. Charles Pease 3604 Oval Drive, spoke about the proposal to take eight cents off the tax bill, which the average increase will drop to 14.9 percent, and will take the condo owners down to 20.9 percent, which is an invitation to Proposition 13 and Council is asking for a taxpayer revolt. He said Council should consider the three percent cap. He said the information is on the Web, but they find that the numbers

don't match, as he has five different numbers for the cost per student per year in the system, which run from \$12,301, \$13,670, \$14,972 and \$17,252. He spoke of the increases in the school budget.

85. Herb Cooper-Levy, 1527 Oronoco Street, said he has been a homeowner for 30 years and his home increased in value on an average of 10 percent per year, and it is a good investment to live in Alexandria and he didn't have any qualms about paying the real estate taxes. He said on affordable housing, there are good proposals in the budget, but he didn't think they went far enough. He said \$3.7 million will represent enough funds to be able to secure about 40 units of housing, Federal dollars are going away and CDBG and Section 8 are under severe attack, and State dollars don't work well today. He said what is necessary is an increase in the local tax contribution to the City's housing trust fund. He said two cents of the property tax needs to be dedicated to affordable housing.

86. Paul Wilson, 1402 Orchard Street, representing the Historic Alexandria Resource Commission, said the CIP budget does not contain any provision for maintenance or repairs in the five out-years that it does this year of \$150,000. He said a list of improvements have been forwarded to Council, with a letter from the Commission recommending that it put a little bit of money aside each of those years in the CIP to maintain their facilities.

87. Charles Greenfield, 6066 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, director of the Legal Services of Northern Virginia, spoke in favor of the Community Partnership Fund and the increase recommended by the City Manager. He said they are the largest single agency in the Community Partnership Fund, and for the last five years, their percentage of money has gone down, and they have had a 23 percent reduction over the last five years. He recommended there be some way Legal Services of Northern Virginia can be outside of the Community Partnership Fund, so the Fund can be used to fund newer and other organizations.

88. Tim Frelich, 6066 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, managing attorney at the Virginia Justice Center, a bilingual, nonprofit legal aid program that supports low wage immigrant workers in their efforts to find justice and fair treatment in the workplace and urged Council to fully fund the modest increase to the Community Partnership Fund and urged Council to find separate and more stable continuing funding for basic legal services provided by Legal Services of Northern Virginia outside of the CPF.

89. Paol Hertel, 1217 Michigan Court, said he wrote a paper trying to clarify where the City has spent money and compared July 1997 with the current budget and three things are readily apparent: the costs associated with development has increased, the cost associated with schools has increased and costs associated with deferred capital improvements have increased. If it takes the School budget and assumes it does a zero per capita real growth rate, even though the population declined, the budget today would be \$25 million less. There is \$20 million in cash capital that wasn't here in 1997, and it has debt servicing for the schools that is \$19

million extra, which adds up to \$65 million. Without those items, the budget would have grown by an annual rate of 5.26 percent or half a percent real per capita growth rate annually. He urged Council to look at the CIP, the School budget and insure that people on fixed or low incomes are not forced out of the City, and he objected to the simplistic short-term cap on taxes.

90. Ellen Pickering, 103 Roberts Lane, said she hoped to support the social programs as Council deems necessary and appropriate while Council uses its fair and good judgement. She asked Council to continue the open space one cent designation, she hoped Council would continue to clean up the oil spill at Oronoco, it will give full support to the Planning Department as it grapples with the surge of development, it will support historic properties, and she would appreciate it if one could watch the tapes of Council without paying \$25.00 to get them, and if it can't find a spot to listen in City Hall, maybe they could be put in the library. She asked before that it have a portable rise to the podiums in the Council Chambers. She also asked for a heater for the Chinquapin pool. Ms. Pickering said a group called ACT, Alexandria Community Trust, was formed and they were supposed to come forward with money for capital projects, and the City gave them money and she asked what has happened to it.

Mayor Euille said ACT is another private foundation, but what she speaks to is the Alexandria Capital Development Foundation, ACDF, which is up and running and in the process of fundraising.

91. Jeremy Flachs, 109 E. Randolph Avenue, representing Housing Action, a group of advocates for affordable housing, and as a homeowner, asked that Council dedicate the recordation tax, and one cent of the real property tax for affordable housing. The need for preservation for affordable housing is great, due to the rapid loss of such housing for high end condo conversion and townhome redevelopment. He said it is time for the City to provide adequate funding for the City chartered nonprofit housing corporation. Without such funding, the properties coming on market that house a lot of the lower and moderate income residents will be lost forever. He said this is a golden opportunity, where it can still roll back much of the increase in the property tax but save at least one penny for affordable housing, and further delay will result in the indefinite loss of affordable properties.

Mayor Euille noted the upcoming budget meetings and work sessions.

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**WHEREUPON**, upon motion by Vice Mayor Pepper, seconded by Councilman Gaines and carried unanimously, the special City Council meeting of April 4, 2005, was adjourned at 9:12 p.m. The voting was as follows:

|        |       |           |       |
|--------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Pepper | "aye" | Krupicka  | "aye" |
| Gaines | "aye" | Macdonald | "aye" |
| Euille | "aye" | Smedberg  | "aye" |

Woodson "aye"

APPROVED BY:

WILLIAM D. EUILLE MAYOR

ATTEST:

Jackie M. Henderson, CMC, City Clerk